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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes discussions at an invitational workshop on women in Nigeria. The discussion centered on overcoming sex bias and discrimination in all areas of life so that women could contribute to the national development effort. The following broad topics were discussed: (1) cultural attitudes that discourage the education of women; (2) women's health problems, including prenatal care and birth control; (3) traditional attitudes that discriminate against women, including female circumcision, male child preference, and child marriages; (4) the unrecognized contributions of women to the economy through domestic and agricultural work and the need for increased political involvement; (5) the role of women as monitors of environmental quality; and (6) the role of women in developing peaceful solutions to conflict on the interpersonal, familial, interethnic, and national levels. A list of participants, the text of the two introductory addresses, and a description of the Africa Leadership Forum are appended. (FMW)

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FRICA LEADERSHIP FORUM

FARM HOUSE DIALOGUE

Women in Development

Dialogue 7

17-19 November, 1987

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FARM HOUSE DIALOGUE -

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

The Dialogue is neither a political gathering nor is it a gathering to chastise and condemn. It is basically a brainstorming event. Everyone is at liberty to freely express his or her opinions.

It is a concerned attempt to search for solutions to national problems through discussion. It does not seek to delve into who brought about particular predicament of the nation. Although a knowledge of how the nation got to a specific impasse or difficult situation might provide useful lessons for the future.

It, instead, is an attempt to engage in a proper analysis of national problems and arrive through discussions and dialogue at practical suggestions and recommendations which may help in resolving all or part of these problems.

In consequence, the Dialogue places great emphasis on the selection of individuals to participate in the discussions, noting the importance of inviting always personalities who have knowledge and insights into the particular national issues being discussed and who can make substantial contributions.

It is aimed not always to reach consensus but to provide opportunity for recording honest disagreements on vital national issues.

Each Dialogue will result in a publication that will capture the essence of the discussion and the main conclusions reached.

FARM HOUSE DIALOGUE

Dialogue 7

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson Mrs. Tejumade Alakija
Rapporteur Mrs. Mary Kanu
Editor Prof. Akin L. Mabogunje

Introduction

The seventh Farm House Dialogue took place as usual at Obasanjo Farms in Ota on November 17 to 19, 1989. General Olusegun Obasanjo as Chief host delivered a welcome address in which he asked participants to consider the subject matter: Women in Development as a special and serious issue. Women, he observed, make up more than 50% of the Nigerian population. By virtue of their physiology, women are the givers and nurturers of life. The social responsibilities that come with this biological function make women a peculiar force in the overall national growth and development; hence their condition in the society would definitely affect the overall development of the country. He considered it unrealistic for any country to marginalise such a large and important segment of its society and yet hope to make significant strides in development.

While reminding participants of the frank and non-attributive nature of discussions at the Farm House Dialogue, he urged them not just to focus on the diagnosis of the problems but, more importantly, to concentrate on offering practical solutions that would uplift women from their present doubly marginalised positions.

The Chairperson, Mrs. Tejumade Alakija, also delivered an opening address. In her paper, she contended that discussions on national development should normally be on non-biological basis. She took cognizance, however, of the uneven social development of the sexes in Nigeria and agreed with the host that there was need to dramatically

transform the prevailing status of women. This can only be achieved if the necessary steps are taken to redress the imbalance. She pointed out the glaring absence of women in national decision-making positions in Nigeria and attributed their continued subjugation to lack of access to political and economic power. She therefore urged participants to do justice to the subject matter: Women in Development.

With the two addresses setting the stage, participants agreed to focus on the following broad issues:

1. A working definition of Development and of Woman
2. Factors of development as they affect women:
   a. Education
   b. Health
   c. Culture
   d. Politics, agriculture and the economy
   e. Environment
   f. War and Peace
   g.
3 Conclusion

Definition of the Development and Woman

Participants agreed to adopt the definition of development from Dialogue 1 (Leadership for Development). This defined "Development" as "a process concerned with people's capacity in a defined area over a defined period to manage and induce change; that is to predict, plan, understand, monitor change and reduce or eliminate unwanted or unwarranted change".

Although proferring an appropriate definition of "woman" attracted wide and diverse views, participants agreed that it was more useful to define woman in the context of her role in development, bearing in mind her special biological function. Hence, "woman" was defined as

"the feminine component of the human specie who, apart from serving as a vehicle for nurturing human life, is also a produce, a consumer and an equally endowed agent for fostering a wholesome political, social and economic development in society". Dialogue noted that the woman being the nurturer of life is in her nature the very beginning of the development process. This fact makes it mandatory for her to be recognised in this all-embracing role and to be appreciated for her ultimate and unique contribution to societal development.

Factors of Development as They Affect Women

The dialogue then identified the cardinal elements of a sustainable development as education, health, culture, politics, economy, agriculture, enhanced environmental quality and peaceful co- existence. It proceeded to examine how far women have been involved in raising the level at which each of these elements is manifested in Nigerian society. It also considered what need to be done collectively and in different parts of the country to raise these levels especially as they relate to women. Finally, it evaluated the impact that enhancing women's contribution to each of these elements can have on the overall development of Nigeria.

Dimensions of Women Education

Education for development was defined as a life-long formal and informal learning process. The Dialogue observed that although accounting for over 50% of the population, women represent a very small fraction of the educated in Nigeria. Participants noted that by their peculiar nature and position in society as mothers, wives, sisters and teachers in the home, mass education for women is critically needed to prepare them fully for their inevitable socialization roles. Education for women is fundamental if they are also to make their maximum contribution to national development. The Dialogue noted,

however, that the ratio of boys to girls in primary and secondary schools, in teacher training, vocational and technical colleges is about 9:4. The exceptions are recorded in Federal Government-owned schools where the ratio of boys to girls is 9:16. These variable ratios reflect the prevalence in different parts of Nigeria of socio-cultural practices which discriminate against women. These practices range from outright denial of educational opportunities on religious grounds to stereotype "feminine" courses that limit women's exposure to various types of academic disciplines and subsequently to employment choices. These cultural barriers make them victims of child marriage, the first to be eliminated from school if a family is in financial crisis or when a handicapped member needs care, and their dominance in service-jobs that give them limited opportunity to aspire to their fullest potentials.

The Dialogue expressed concern at this waste of vital human resources and was of the view that pragmatic steps ought to be taken to effect concrete changes. First, at the policy level, government should implement and monitor its Blue Print on Women's Education. With this in view, an awareness campaign should be mounted to educate parents on the advantages of girls' education, and encourage the young girls to choose any course they desire in order to widen their range of career choices. Secondly, government must involve and encourage non governmental organisations (NGO's) in the educational process. These organisations should be surveyed, registered and allocated roles and responsibilities. This would enable others to share in the promotional and financial burden involved in education generally but in girls' education in particular. Thirdly, government must involve women in the decision-making levels of administration not only to ensure that they are integrated in the development process but also that they are in a position to monitor and promote women's participation in all aspects of nation-building. Young Nigerian girls should also be exposed to the activities of various international agencies by making available to them

information that would enable them tap such sources to fund projects as well as acquire international exposure. Finally, government must also provide adequate funding for women's education and promulgate decrees and edicts that would give legal backing to women's right to education in the context of promotion and protection of fundamental human rights.

Women And Health in Development

Good health has been defined as a state of physical, psychological and social well-being which enables an individual to lead an optimally productive life. Good and adequate medical care was considered vital for ensuring good health for the development of women. Participants observed that women and children in addition to old age were the most vulnerable group in society in matters of health care. It was recognised that the prevailing poor health status among most women was a reflection of their low societal status and the general problem of poverty in the society. In addition to biological problems, women also suffer from cultural taboos and practices based on superstition. These practices were identified as female circumcision, mishandling of the umbilical cord at the birth of a baby, poor methods of child weaning, and other nutritional taboos. As a result, the incidence of high maternal mortality rate (17/1000) in Nigeria is said to be the highest in the world.

The Dialogue expressed concern that the lack of education in matters of simple hygiene and preventive health care as well as the activities of a largely uneducated class of traditional birth attendants compounds the problems associated with pregnancy, labour and birth. In addition, the lack of accessibility to family planning methods because of the clause that requires the consent of their husbands results in a high rate of unwanted pregnancies that, in turn, leads to a high level of energy depletion among women which makes them more susceptible

to illnesses, diseases and deaths.

Participants identified inadequate information for teenage girls on how to protect themselves as partly responsible for exposing them to unwanted pregnancies and the associated disease and vices that make them drop out of school. Their resort to surreptitious and quack abortionists, affliction with sexually transmitted disease (STD), early marriages and early pregnancies, vesico vagina fistula (VVF), prostitution, skin bleaching and drug addiction were indicated as problem areas which inhibit women's effective contribution to national development.

The Dialogue also observed that the absence of adequate health care delivery system makes it impossible for special facilities to be provided to take care of such peculiar women problems as breast and cervical cancer. Poor data collection and lack of adequate statistical analysis for planning and for demonstrating problems peculiar to women were additional impediment to ensuring good health for them.

The Dialogue therefore suggested that since women's health problems are many and peculiar, they should be given special consideration and funding. Clinics should be established in all the rural and urban centres to facilitate primary health care, to provide adequate maternal and child care and make available and accessible required drugs. Greater emphasis should be given to creating the necessary awareness among women to make use of these facilities. Women should be educated on the dangers of drug abuse as it affects their health and dignity and on the hazards in such traditional practices and beliefs like female circumcision and child marriages which are detrimental to their health. Family planning, primary health care and nutrition education should be provided and emphasized to reduce the high infant and maternal mortality rates.

Special clinics for women's peculiar ailments should be established

and equipped to help diagnose cases like cancer which is one of the commonest killer of women today. Traditional birth attendants who represent the most widespread and most easily available health personnel especially in the rural areas also need to be retrained and encouraged since most women at the grassroots patronise them because of their cheapness and proximity. Equally important, the Dialogue enjoined parents and guardians to take a more rational and liberal view of sex education. Young girls should be made aware of the implications of developing intimate relationship with the opposite sex outside of wedlock. School curricula, it was suggested, should be expanded to include sex education taken alongside and patterned after the teaching of hygiene. In addition, more young girls should be encouraged at the University level to read medicine so that they can specialise in the areas of gynecology, obstetrics and paediatrics which would make for a wider range of consultant choices especially for those women who shy away from male medical doctors.

The Dialogue took the position that family support and the sharing of domestic chores would help reduce the high incidence of mental and nervous breakdown among women. The traditional African method of taking care of the aged within the family setting was considered healthy and should be encouraged. Of far greater importance was the effective participation of women in the formulation and implementation of health care policies that affect women. School curricula must be reviewed and structured at the carious educational levels toward enhancing the quality of life and the status of women in the society. The inclusion of programmes such as women studies and civics in the curriculum of secondary schools should be explored.

If women in performing their natural role as the bearer and nurturer of life are crucial to development, they should be properly equipped to facilitate the responsibility. Therefore, in addition to fundamental and basic education, women should educate themselves on

[illegible] environment and the economy. They [illegible] rate, as is [illegible] of indifference [illegible] their society or the way the society functions.

[illegible] development

Culture was defined as the total way of life of a people. It is fundamental because it affects every aspect of life of the individual and cuts across relations of gender and class. The culture of a people therefore informs the orientation of their social norms, attitudes and values to issues of development.

The Dialogue observed that endemic in the culture of most Nigerian communities are such practices as son preference, early [illegible], taking of dowries, female circumcision, negative attitude to [illegible] ness, family cohesion, demeaning widowhood rites and gender-discriminating inheritance practices. Participants viewed with dismay cultural attitudes to women arising from these practices which affect societal and individual appraisal of women's self-worth. The result is that women come to be conditioned to be willing to subject themselves to societal abuse of the type experience of the type experience in widowhood rites and self- abuse of the type of that leads to denying female children of good nutrition. Even in the urban centres and in civilised circles, the stereotype gender roles make women overplay their feminity by accepting that they are the weaker sex, overemphasise the dainty nature of their comportment, view the ambition of some members of their sex as ominous and regard exceptional achievements by women as competing with men. Hence, many women feel a sense of role conflict when their achievements entail deviations from the accepted norms. Their moral probity is them called in question and they are suspected of having reached these heights as a result of having been sexually indiscreet and dishonourable to their families. One weapon often employed to force women back to the perceived traditional role has been religion as well as the application of certain discrimina-

tory civil laws that perpetuate the oppression of women. The Dialogue identified seclusion, child marriage, subjugation of women and denial of certain rights like in religious practices as some of the misinterpretations of religious tenets. Even certain laws made by government tend to strengthen this socio-cultural line and to discriminate in practice against women in areas like marriage, divorce, property rights, taxation, right to passport, law of bail, unequal allowances, family planning and population control policies and the response of security agents to wife battering.

The Dialogue identified a dynamic culture as crucial to development. Culture is motion must have the ability to jettison antiquated and negative laws and practices whilst emphasizing those positive aspects of our culture like family cohesion that ensures the total well-being of a people. However, in opting for a dynamic culture, participants expressed concern at the expected side effects of actions taken towards bringing about changes. It was agreed that whilst change is desirable, it must be gradual and non- confrontational if it is to be effective.

The Dialogue was of the view that there is urgent need to educate the society as a whole, both men and women, to change their attitude and raise the level of their cultural awareness in matters of gender. Men and women need to be re-oriented in their perceptions of womanhood. Children should be exposed to those aspects of our cultural values that regard sisterhood in a positive light and enhance the perception of a definitive role for women in the development process.

Participants frowned at the way women are portrayed in the media and in advertisements mainly as sex objects. While enjoining women to be more careful and to participate only in programmes and advertisements that uphold their dignity, participants averred that the focus of most women columns in the media, and women programmes in the

electronic media was too much on what can be described as "feminine fancies". In the opinion of participants these are neither ennobling nor edifying nor are they calculated to raise women's perception of their own self-worth of their unique contribution to societal development. It was suggested that more attention be focussed in the media on concrete issues capable of mobilizing and energizing women to realising the best that is in them. Such columns and programmes can be better utilized when devoted to enlightenment campaigns on and about the need to discourage, and if possible abolish, antiquated practices such as female circumcision, male child preference, widowhood rites, attitude to barrenness, the Osu Caste system and child marriages.

The media should champion the campaign to abolish all sexually discriminatory laws in our statute books. They should equally promote and sustain those values which enhance a high respect for human dignity irrespective of sex, respect for elders, family cohesion and solidarity, high personal discipline and strict observance of a moral code.

The Dialogue discussed at length the possibility of establishing of agency to be known as Ministry of Women Development which should be charged with the review of various laws and cultural practices in the society that are inimical to even development. The institution should also plan and monitor programmes that would eradicate antiquated values and advance progressive ones. Finally, quite a number of participants tended in favour of this Ministry designing and presenting for promulgation enforceable legislations against undesirable and discriminatory practices against women.

Women In Politics, Agriculture And The Economy

It was recognised that possession of economic strength enhances the acquisition and exercise of political power. Political power helps development. Thus, political power was identified as the crux of the

efforts to bring women into the mainstream of development. The Dialogue observed that the role of Nigerian women in economic activities even though significant has not been accorded the recognition it deserves. Domestic production, for instance, which is by far the domain of women's economic activities is largely defined as unpaid labour and is distinct from other realms of productive activities like agriculture. Yet 75 percent of the agricultural work in the country is done by women under the most strenuous conditions and with primitive tools. Their role in other sectors of the economy is often taken for granted and hence tends to be ignored in the computation of their contributions to the gross national production. In other words, the tendency to grossly under-estimate the productive share of women must be assumed as largely responsible for their virtual exclusion or marginalization in the political sphere. Participants noted that such exclusion was not a feature of traditional practice in most Nigerian communities but is largely a product of alien policy adoption, no doubt related to the fact that in the so-called formal or foreign derived economic sector women constitute less than 20 percent of wage labour whilst in agriculture they are the exploited victims of male middlemen.

The Dialogue was of the view that this disadvantaged position of Nigerian women in the economy has been rendered more precarious by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The implication is that they are now more than ever before occupied with matters of daily survival that they have very little time to organise their involvement in national politics. In short, present economic circumstances have marginalised women in the fundamental process of the allocation and distribution of power and resources in the nation.

The Dialogue noted that over the years, particularly since the attainment of political independence, the contribution of women to the political process has been progressively on the account of a number of inter-related factors. These include the involvement of the military in

politics, the contradictions of a dependent capitalist economy and the attendant death of social justice and equity in such a system.

The Dialogue therefore strongly recommended that Nigerian women be adequately conscientized to participate in the politics of the Third Republic. In recognition of the link between economic production and poli ical power, all the productive activities of women should be re-organised, remunerated and compensated. Socio- cultural and legal structures which inhibit the increased productivity of women should be challenged and transformed. For instance, programmes should be developed to make land and credit facilities more accessible to women engaged in agricultural production. This can also incorporate the re-introduction of subsides in the agricultural sector for all farmers, especially the women.

The Better Life for Rural Women Programme was noted by the participants. However, the Dialogue suggested that State executors of the programme should device means to help develop local leadership among women at the community or project level. The dialogue also called for the establishment of an agency to be known as "Women in Development" whose primary function will be identification, registration and promotion of women's associations and organisations which are engaged in economic activities or political enlightenment.

The media was identified as a powerful channel for the projection of women's view and positions. In addition, women's organisations should incorporate political education in their programmes so that women at all levels would be able to fight their double marginalization based on class and gender. The Dialogue therefore called on women to take seriously the need to participate actively and effectively in the "new breed" politics leading to the emergence of the Third Republic.

Women And The Environment

The Dialogue noted that several factors of development exacerbate the degradation of the physical environment. For instance, deforestation to provide fuel wood and agricultural land, air, water, and land pollution, erosion, sea incursion, pest invasion and so on have all combined to threaten normal life. Nigeria has not as yet established large enough number of industries to add such other hazards as acid rain and green house effect to our environmentally degraded situations but this can become a fact of life earlier than can be imagined if no conscious effort is taken to begin to understand and rectify the situation.

The Dialogue identified poverty as the main factor of environmental degradation in most parts of Nigeria both urban and rural. Women are as involved in this matter as are the men. The women have special responsibility for environmental sanitation in most communities. Whilst noting that there is still much room for improving women's capacity to better discharge this responsibility, the Dialogue observed that most local governments have failed in meeting their own share of responsibility of collecting and removing solid wastes to safe landfill sites and protecting waterways from being fouled especially by industrial and household effluent. Similarly, it was noted that although women have participated actively in cutting down forests especially for firewood this was not unrelated to the difficulty of making kerosene and gas available regularly in urban and rural areas.

Furthermore, methods of waste disposal, river pollution and toxic waste dump affect the health of women most. Pest invasions in homes like cockroaches and rodents also affect the health of the family. Participants agreed that these environmental pollutants should be of general concern and efforts should be made to intensify enlightenment campaign for improved environmental sanitation. The Dialogue believed that women should be the custodians of the environment by

being watch-dogs and protectors of environmental quality. It therefore recommended that policies should be designed and funds made available at the grassroots in the efforts at re-afforestation and environmental maintenance. Alternative sources of energy like coal, kerosene, gas and solar energy should be more extensively promoted. Waste collection and disposal should be taught in schools as part of elementary hygiene. Water is basic and its place in sanitation cannot be over- emphasised. Bad habit like littering, toilet habits, and congestion in homes should be discouraged. Much more importantly. the young must be taught the importance of preserving and planting trees and keeping their environment neat, beautiful, tidy and clean.

Women, War And Peace

The Dialogue noted that conflict could arise at the interpersonal, familial, inter-ethnic and national levels. Their resolution at the higher levels is what politics is all about. But violence which is often employed to settle conflicts was condemned by participants since war has serious adverse effects on the human race in general. Thus, the elimination of war through disarmament and cooperation are processes which are generally supportive of development because they could make possible the re-allocation of defence funds for development purposes.

The Dialogue recommended that the education of children should be oriented towards nurturing positive values in them and reducing psychological strains which may be based on egocentricism and other negative anti-social tendencies. Nigerian women should work closely with other international Women Groups towards promoting pacifist instincts in society and diverting more attention to developmental issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Dialogue noted that the war against discrimination against women in all spheres of Nigerian life must be fought not only by women themselves but also by those men who believe in justice and even development. Women who want to be at the vanguard of this struggle for change must practicalise what they preach and radicalise the conscience of women for structural transformation of society and societal values.

Women must help their sister folk to aspire to greater heights and to support and vote for those among them who can make a success of a political career. For, it is only from a position of political strength that women can see to the formulation and implementation of policies that would enhance their development. The Dialogue reiterated that a nation that genuinely desires development must not keep half of its population marginalised. Therefore, it called on the Nigerian government to help harness all the resources at its disposal including especially the crucial contributions of women to achieve an enduring development of the nation.

Above all participants at the dialogue observed and took cognizance that in realizing the goal of elevating women and increasing their contribution to the development process, the cooperative and collaborative support and assistance of both the women and men folk is required.

The Dialogue noted with satisfaction that in the distant and the immediate past as well as in recent times, there have been women whose roles and performance in all works of life were not only commendable but worthy of emulation. Such women and their works must be placed in bold relief in the teaching of history in our schools for other women to emulate. They must be brought into national focus and the fact that they are found in all parts of the country emphasized. Participants further recommended that legends that have evolved around some of

these women should not be ignored but should form the material for children books and popular folklores. They play a vital role in stimulating and conditioning the performance, contribution and disposition of the younger generations to matters connected with the development and greatness of the nation.

ANNEXURE I

List of Participants

1. General Olusegun Obasanjo, former Head of State of Nigeria.
2. Chief (Mrs.) Tejumade Alakija, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
3. Hajiya Bilikisu Abdurrahaman, Director, Mamser, National Headquarters, Abuja.
4. Mrs. Joe Nwokedi, 102, Awolowo Road, Railway Compound Ebute-Metta, Lagos.
5. Mrs Feyi George, Government House, Akure. Ondo State.
6. Chief (Mrs.) Keji Okunowo, Managing Director, CBS, 7, Aromire Avenue, Ikeja.
7. Hajiya Nnadzwa Sakiwa, Galadima Compound, Pategi. Kwara State.
8. Mrs. Sarah Jibril, 5, Tankpatu Road, Pategi. Kwara-State.
9. Mrs Mary Kanu, The Guardian Newspapers, Isolo.
10. Dr. Bala Musa, MAMSER Directorate, Abuja.
11. Mrs Lorna George, Corporatee Affairs Manager, African Paints Nig. Ltd., Oregun.
12. Miss Ifueko Omoigui, Arthur Anderson & Co., 74B Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.
13. Mrs. Clara Osinulu, African American Institute 31-33, Martins Street, P. O. Box 2382, Lagos.
14. Mr. Nyaknno Osso, Newswatch, 62, Oregun Road, Ikeja, Lagos.
15. Mrs. Fati Muazu, Director General, Ministry of Land Survey, Bauchi State.
16. Mrs. Stella Omiyi, FIDA, P. O. Box 3087, Marina, Lagos.
17. Ms. P. Uche Bialonwu - UNICEF Zonal Office, 5, Mbaise Street, Off Upper Chime Avenue, New Haven - Enugu.
18. Mrs. Maud Kardylas, B.. 427, Douala, Cameroon.
19. Ms. Taiwo Adejinle, Nigeria Airways, TBS complex, Lagos.
20. Mrs. Glory Kilanko, WAEC, P.M.B. 1022 Yaba, Lagos.
21. Mr. Yima Sen, UNDP, 11, Queens Drive, Ikoyi, Lagos.

22. Mr. Mohammed Bulama, Dept., of Political Science, University of Maiduguri.
23. Dr. E. B. Anwanwe, No. 10, Nyong Essien Street, P. O. Box 732, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
24. Mrs. Adefemi Taire, SMG, Military Governors Office, Lagos State.
25. Chief (Mrs.) Nike Akande, Group Finance Director, Assam Industries Nig. Ltd., 44, Town Planning Way, Ilupeju, Lagos.
26. Chief (Mrs) Toyin Olakunrin, 20, Norman Williams St. S.W. Ikoyi, Lagos.
27. Mrs. Biodun Adewodu, Manager, Obasanjo Farms, P.O. Box 90, Ota.
28. Dr. Mrs B.F. Iyun, Dept. of Geography, University of Ibadan.
29. Hajiya Aisha Abdurahaman, BCCI, Apapa, Lagos.
30. Dr. Babafemi Badejo, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Political Science, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.
31. Prof. Ojetunji Aboyade, PAI, Oshuntokun Avenue, Ibadan.
32. Dr. Y.M. Maiangwa, Director, Africa Leadership Forum, P.O. Box, 2286, Abeokuta.
33. Mr. Lade Bonuola, Director, The Guardian Newspapers, Rutam House, Isolo Expressway, Isolo, Lagos.
34. Mr. Ayodele Aderinwale, African Leadership Forum, P. O. Box 2286, Abeokuta.
35. Dr. Tunji Dare, Guardian Newspapers, Rutam House, Isolo Expressway, Isolo, Lagos.
36. Mr Ibi Sofekun, Pinhole Creations, Ikoyi, Lagos

ANNEXURE II

Opening Address by ALF Chairman

General Olusegun Obasanjo

I welcome all of you to the 7th Farm House Dialogue. I consider the Dialogue of this weekend a special one because of the subject matter: **Women In Development**. Women occupy a unique position as a gender in all societies. Theirs is the only physiology configured to give birth to new life. This is why all of us born of women must regard the issue of women generally, particularly in development as a serious and important issue. Because, to start with the old adage that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world" is very much relevant, particularly in our own condition of under development.

Moreso when over 50 per cent of our population are women, Women of different ages and different capabilities and capacities. I believe that it is unrealistic and grossly wasteful to talk of development while 50 per cent of the actors are not seriously, meaningfully and effectively integrated, woven and made to participate actively in the development process.

Education, Health, Environmental sustenance, family planning and active participation in popular democracies have been identified and accepted as the key components of sustainable development.

Education in particular was considered in our previous Dialogues as a cardinal and central factor of development. Effective and adequate participation of women in our development process requires that we give a serious and specific attention to women education.

Good Health as a stratetic imperative of the development process also has a special women angle. Biologically women health needs and

requirements are different because of their socially imposed responsibilities. The health of women as human beings, pregnancy, in child birth and in child rearing also requires a specific and adequate attention. How an we improve the health of our women to enable them release the creative energies at their disposal for the development process? While specific attention must be paid to these and many more, issues such as environmental sustenance, family planning and population control, equitable distribution of resources, democratisation of access to and popular participation in the democratic process are developmental practices in which women are at the centre.

Our environment must be protected against continous degradation through our own uninformed actions. Deforestation is one specific example. The unique role of women demands that they champion the crusade against environmental abuse - How can we make our women the real custodian and protector of our environment?

In a similar vien, family planning and population control is an aspect in which women must lead. Because if they lead and perform we can be rest assured of success and progress. If they don't then we cannot talk of progress or reasonable advance.

The effective participation of our women in the political process must start and with the need raising the consciousness of our women. They need to participate not just as voters but as mainstream actors. How might we raise their consciousness?

Equitable and democratised distribution of our resources also demands that we work out specific modalities that can assist us in increasing the participation of our women in industry, in commerce in agriculture. For now majority of our women are down stream participants. We need to envision ways and means of making them richer and better farmers. They must move from the realm of petty trading into the commanding heights of our commercial network.

What are the possible ways?

Let me point out that our gathering this weekend must be devoted to evolving practical and possible recommendations. Again I enjoin you all to devote only marginal attention to diagnosis and maximum attention to recommendations that will work. As it is we have only ten years between us and the 21st century. We must start now by laying the foundations for our growth, development and progress in the next millenium.

The next ten years must be devoted to identifying achieveable targets moving and confronting headlong the process of laying those foundations and preparing our youths for building on those foundations.

Finally I want to remind you of the frank and non attributive nature of our discussion. I wish you a fruitful and engaging dialogue.

ANNEXURE III

Chairman's Address

Mrs Tejumade Alakija

General Olusegun Obasanjo, rtd,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to say what a great pleasure it is for me to be here this afternoon and that I consider it a great honour to have been asked to chairman this forum which is the 7th in the series of discussions held on this very important farm, which is fast becoming a Mini United Nation discussion centre. The quick research which I had done, revealed the fact that there had been seven other more general topics discussed in this series of African Leadership Forum. The subjects discussed earlier include:

Education for Development, Youth and Development, Community for Development,Labour and Development; and Leadership for Development.

Also from my research, women had not been invited to play a significant role in any of the earlier discussions. However and before I make my general comments on this specific topic of 'Women in Development', I would like most sincerely to congratulate you, Mr. General, for so ably coming to the rescue of the continent of African in the area of attempting to diagonise what our ailments are, so that we may perhaps, within the next few decades, find lasting solutions to our problems. One finds that, in the past, the various Nations which make up this great Continent of African, less South Africa, had not paid enough attention to looking into their basic problems. Rather they are quick to attribute their difficulties to the deeds or misdeeds of past colonization. In all honesty, it is my personal opinion that thirty years after independence, our problems in Nigeria should no longer be laid at the door step of our one-time colonial masters.

Having said the foregoing, I would like to make some comments on the specific topic that we are about to look into, in this particular Forum Session. This subject is 'Women in Development'. Personally, I would like to conceive and discuss development in any Nation on a non-biological basis. In other words, problems of development in a Nation should be looked at, generally, and all its inhabitants should be adjudged able to become prospective participants on basis of equality. Unless this was done, no meaningful achievement can in my view be expected of that Nation.

To that extent, therefore, a topic like "Importance of Manpower in Nigeria Development" would to me have been more relevant. But since we have to admit that in the Nigerian context, and up to date, there has been a grossly uneven development between the two sexes that make up the population, it then becomes highly relevant that we should concern ourselves with the contributions which the female sex should and could make to the development of our Nation. Indeed, it becomes a high priority if we are to believe what the statistics say that women make up about half of the population of this Nation. For how can we effectively develop this Nation if 50% of its able bodied inhabitants are practically banned from meaningful participation in its development.

It hardly needs an indept study to be able to see that, up to date, there has been hardly any involvement of women in the more important arena of decision making in this country; be it political or economic. There have been a few throw up, of course in some important posts. In other less important areas, women participation has also been minimal. When I got the invitation, to this forum, I was tempted to do a write-up to confirm the fact that women had in fact been both ignored and neglected. But because time would not permit, I did the next best thing and commissioned a write-up by one of the staff in my University, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. What has been produced has been stencilled and is available for distribution during this Session. The paper has, in my view, done justice to the subject and I

commend it to participants for close study. I would suggest that if participants can spend a few hours reading the paper in our leisure, it should be among the papers to be discussed in this Forum in the next day or so.

Historically, there have been quite a number of women in the various parts of Nigeria who had been active and had therefore made their mark on the history of their prospective community. But these are few and far between. However, the fact that they had emerged in different parts of Nigeria gives us the firm belief that the lack of a large number of women in places of importance today, cannot be because women are inherently incapable or are un- intelligent. Several studies done by Sociologists have attributed this unfortunate lapse to other factors. Some of these have been discussed in the paper to which I made reference earlier.

It is most unfortunate that the society itself has built up this strong hierarchy of male domination of the female members. It is found everywhere, in religion and in homes. The female is made submissive to the male to the extent that it is the men who lay down the rules and norms, stating the bounds within which a woman, with decorum, should never go beyond. The fact that historically women had become very active and in some part of this country do become providers of livelihood could be put down to the laziness of a number of husbands, who readily enjoy the contribution made by their wives to the maintenances of their homes.

This evening and during the next twenty-four hours, we will loom more concretely into the reasons why, in spite of the increase in women education and in spite of the fact that there is no feasible discrimination in admission to higher institutions and despite the liberation of women in Nigeria, women still remain largely inactive especially in the political and economic arena of Nigeria. I venture to say that in spite of women liberation, we would require the active support of our fathers, husbands, brothers and sons for any woman to emerge in a position of leadership in Nigeria.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my part as Chairman this evening is only to open discussion, I therefore invite you to come along with me and do justice to this subject which is "Women in Development". Thank you!

BACKGROUND NOTE ON THE AFRICA LEADERSHIP FORUM

Despite over a quarter of a century of political independence, Africa's aspirations and hopes remain today largely unfulfilled. This has not been, however, a period of unmitigated failure in the history of the continent; there have been successes in education, public health, import substitution industries, and in the continuing process of decolonization. The problems of development, peace and security, the health of the world economy, and improving the environment are interrelated global issues; they do not admit of piecemeal solutions.

And yet all countries find that in the absence of true global cooperation, they have to tackle particular aspects of them. At the national level in Africa, the inadequacy of information, data, and resources render the problems daunting. Regionally they are overwhelming.

African leaders have frequently come to their positions with limited experience. Though most of them have battled on, confronting their awesome problems of development and nation-building essentially not only unprepared but unaided, their efforts have been at best only a qualified success.

Africa cannot afford to continue with ill-prepared and unassisted leaders. Those on whom the burden of leadership will fall in future must fully comprehend their responsibilities, duties, and obligations. They must, that is, have exposure and carefully planned preparation if they are to meet the challenges that will face them.

The leaders of tomorrow, however, today have to be pursuing their professional careers. They have little time to devote to gaining a comprehensive knowledge of their own countries and their region, nor of the cultures of their diverse peoples. Nor even to learning about and understanding the actions taken by their present leaders where they do

not impinge on their own areas of expertise.

Most young potential leaders have focused primarily on single issues, lacking time to look at wider, critical regional and world challenges. Time for comprehensive study and reflection, for sharing experiences with persons inside, let alone outside, their countries, region, and field of concentration is very limited. Opportunities for such detached discussion and contemplation are even rarer.

There are no private institutions in Africa devoted to preparing potential leaders with a global outlook, leaders who will be able to cooperate within and across national, regional, and institutional boundaries. Further, it is difficult, if not impossible, in many African countries to gain access to relevant and timely information on most national, regional, and global issues.

Experience in and out of Government and in international fora bears out this situation, one which poses a challenge to address and remedy. One solution is to hold periodically the "Africa Leadership Forum" - a series which may be national, subregional, regional and international in dimension and may vary in duration. Their purpose will be to enhance the knowledge and awareness of young, potential African leaders, placing special emphasis on diagnosing apparent failures of the past; on understanding multiple dimensions and complex interrelations of local, national, regional, and global problems; and on seeking possible approaches to solutions.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Forum is to encourage diagnosis, understanding, and an informed search for solutions to local, regional and global problems, taking full account of their interrelationships and mutual consequences.

To that end, the Forum will develop, organize and support programmes for the training of young and promising Africans with leadership potential so as to expose them to the demands, duties and obligations of leadership positions and to prepare them systematically for assuming higher responsibilities and meeting the challenges of an interdependent world.

The Forum will also endeavour to generate greater understanding and enhance the knowledge and awareness of development and social problems within a global context among young, potential leaders from all sectors of society, cutting across national, regional, continental, professional and institutional borders. This may foster close and enduring relationships among participants, relationships promoting life-long association and cooperation;

Further, the Forum will support and encourage the diagnosis and informed search for appropriate and effective solutions to local and regional Africal problems and to global problems from an African perspective - within the framework of global interdependence -, including conideration of phased action programmes that can be initiated by various countries, sub-regions and institutions.

In addition, there will be specific weekend seminars organized as Farm House Dialogues to be held quarterly. The first of the Dialogues entitled "Leadership for Development" was held on 13-14 May 1988.